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Message Text

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12
ACTION OES-05

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2341

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E.O.11652:N/A
TAGS: TECH, CI
SUBJ: CERRO TOLOLO TELEVISION PROBLEM

1. SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT ALERTED TO POSSIBILITY OF CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GOC AND US OBSERVATORY OVER INSTALLATION OF TELEVISION FACILITIES. END SUMMARY

2. THIS TELEGRAM IS DESIGNED TO ALERT DEPARTMENT TO PROBLEM WHICH HAS ARISEN BETWEEN GOC AND CERRO TOLOLO ASTRONOMICAL OBSRVATORY (OPERATED BY ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH IN ASTRONOMY (AURA) UNDER NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION CONTRACT)CONCERNING GOC DESIRE TO INSTALL AT OBSERVATORY A TELEVISION REPEATER WHICH CERRO TOLOLO OFFICIALS MAINTAIN WOULD INTERFERE WITH ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS.

2. IN DECEMBER 1974, PRESIDENT PINOCHET REQUESTED OF DR. VICTOR M. BLANCO, DIRECTOR OF THE OBSERVATORY, AUTHORIZATION TO INSTALL A TELEVISION BROADCASTING REPEATER STATION ON CERRO TOLOLO, THE OBSERVATORY SITE, IN ORDER TO PERMIT REBROADCAST OF TV SIGNALS TO THE ELQUI RIVER VALLEY TOWNS. SIMILAR REQUESTS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN MADE IN THE PAST, LATEST FROM ALLENDE GOVERNMENT. OBSERVATORY HAS SUCCESSFULLY RESISTEDBECAUSE TRANSMISSION STATIONS, UNLESS VERY LOW IN POWER AND HIGHLY DIRECTIONAL, WOULD CONTAMINATE THE OBSERVATORY SITE WITH RADIATION INTERFERING WITH
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SENSITIVE OBSERVATIONAL EQUIPMENT. CERRO TOLOLO MAINTAINS

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THAT IN ANY EVENT A TRANSMITTER ON ITS PROPERTY WILL
WORK POORLY IN THE ELQUI VALLEY AND WOULD REQUIRE COSTLY
CORRECTION AT A LATER STAGE.

3. LATER IN DECEMBER, OBSERVATORY SUGGESTED AN ALTERNATIVE:
INSTALLATION OF A LOW POWER, HIGHLY DIRECTIONAL REPEATING
STATION ON THE EXISTING TOLOLO MICROWAVE TOWER, WHICH
WOULD BEAM THE SIGNAL TO A TRANSMITTING STATION CLOSER
TO THE TOWN OF VICUNA. SIMILAR REPEATERS ALREADY EXIST
AT TOLOLO TO SERVICE OTHER AREAS AND THEY CAUSE NO
INTERFERENCE.

4. AMBASSADOR MENTIONED PROBLEM TO GEN. BEJARES, SECRETARY
GENERAL OF GOVERNMENT, AND SUBSEQUENTLY AN OFFICIAL OF CHILEAN
NATIONAL TELEVISION INFORMED DR. BLANCO ON JANUARY 13 THAT
THIS LATTER SOLUTION WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. LATER, HOWEVER,
BEJARES REMARKED TO AMBASSADOR THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD
COST $80,000. HE DID NOT INDICATE THIS WOULD AFFECT GOC
DECISION, BUT ON FEBRUARY 27 AMBASSADOR RECEIVED
TELEPHONE CALL FROM CERRO TOLOLO STATING THAT BY
DIRECTION OF PRESIDENT PINOCHET, LOCAL INTENDENTE AND
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL TELEVISION WERE NOW INSISTING
THAT NO MONEY AVAILABLE TO ACQUIRE NEEDED EQUIPMENT
FOR OBSERVATORY'S PROPOSED SOLUTION, AND WITHIN FIFTEEN
DAYS GOC INTENDED TO INSTALL TRANSMITTER ON TOLOLO TOWER.

5. EMBASSY IS ATTEMPTING TO TRACK DOWN BASIC DOCUMENTS
INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHMENT OF CERRO TOLOLO, TO DETERMINE
WHETHER GOC WOULD BE WITHIN ITS REIGHTS IN GOING AHEAD
AND WHETHER IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR AURA TO HAVE RECOURSE TO
CHILEAN COURTS. AURA CAN UNDOUBTEDLY FURNISH DEPARTMENT WITH THIS
MATERIAL IF REQUIRED.

6. COMMENT: CERRO TOLOLO HAS IMPRESSION PRESIDENT
PINOCHET AND HIS SUBORDINATES FEEL UNDER POLITICAL
PRESSURE TO MOVE ON TELEVISION SERVICE FOR ELQUI VALLEY.
POSSIBILITY OF SETTLING MATTER BY HAVING AURA PAY FOR
REPEATER IS OBVIOUS: AT MOMENT CERRO TOLOLO OFFICIALS
SAY THEY UNABLE TO DO THIS. MR. GILBERT LEE AND
DR. VICTOR BLANCO AT AURA (KITT PEAK NATIONAL OBSERVATORY)
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WILL HAVE BETTER IDEA REGARDING THIS POSSIBILITY.
POPPER

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NNN

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